

THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS
IN WEST AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR
SUBREGIONAL SECURITY

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Strategy

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2007

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 15-06-2007		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) Aug 2006 - Jun 2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa: Implications for Subregional Security				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Valentine U. Okoro				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD 1 Reynolds Ave. Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-1352				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The West African subregion is host to strings of violent armed conflicts. These conflicts result in enormous human tragedy and account for the economic and societal deprivation that continues to plague the subregion while also stifling its development. A number factors account for these violence that afflicts the region, spreading across national boundaries with different political situations. This study examines the role played by small arms and light weapons in not only exacerbating these conflicts but also perpetuating the prevailing climate of insecurity in the West Africa Subregion.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS West Africa, Small Arms Proliferation, Light Weapons, West Africa Subregion, West African Security					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 91	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN WEST AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUBREGIONAL SECURITY, by MAJ Valentine Okoro, 91 pages.

The West African subregion is host to strings of violent armed conflicts. These conflicts result in enormous human tragedy and account for the economic and societal deprivation that continues to plague the subregion while also stifling its development. A number of factors account for this violence that afflicts the region, spreading across national boundaries with different political situations. This study examines the role played by small arms and light weapons in not only exacerbating these conflicts but also perpetuating the prevailing climate of insecurity in the West Africa Subregion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like thank my thesis committee, Col Jerry Jorgensen, Mr Hebert Merrick, and LTC Horton Douglas for their patience and guidance and especially for their invaluable editorial comments and suggestions.

I would also like to thank the professional and helpful staff at CARL for their assistance and contribution in the conduct of this study.

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
LURD	Liberians United for Democracy
MRU	Mano River Union
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPFL	National Patriot Liberation front of Liberia
RMCS	Royal Military College of Science
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapon
ULIMO	United Liberation movement of Liberia
ULIMO J	United Liberation movement of Liberia-Johnson
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The end of the cold war ushered in a spate of renewed global interrelation and interdependence that spurred the world into an era of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity. This regrettably was not the case for Sub-Sahara Africa and the West African subregion in particular. The end of the Cold War had in contrast unleashed an outbreak of callous intrastate and transtate conflicts resulting in untold magnitude of human tragedy. The sub regional has in the past two decades ignominiously played host to some of the most callous and brutal conflicts in recent history. West Africa has undeservedly come to be epitomized by massive killings, internal displacements, wanton refugee flows and acute poverty.

The subregion essentially portrays to the world a gloomy picture of human deprivation and indignity. This was the image captured by Robert Kaplan in his *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* when he wrote, “West Africa is becoming the symbol of world wide demographic, environment, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real ‘strategic’ danger. Disease, over population, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-state and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism.”¹ In inquiring into the security of West Africa, this paper will seek to explore the role small arms and light weapons (SALW) have come to play in the equation of armed violence and subregional security.

Background to the Problem

Seeking to proffer solutions to the myriad of problems confronting the subregion, various commentators have adduced a litany of causative factors. As varying and wide ranging as these factors have turned, a denominator that resonates from the various accounts is that of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The argument by some other scholars that SALW do not cause conflict is well taken, but its spiral effect on conflicts remains too significant to ignore. According to Ero and Ndinga-Muvumba writing on Small Arms and Light Weapons in a contribution to Adekbajo and Rashid's *West Africa's Security Challenges Building Peace in a Troubled Region* "While small arms and light weapons do not of course, cause conflicts, they soon become part of the conflict equation by fuelling and exacerbating underlying tensions, generating more insecurity, deepening the sense of crisis, and adding to the number of casualties."²

While prolonging conflict, SALW also blighten the chances of resolution of such conflicts; warring factions, as demonstrated in the Liberian Civil War have been known to concede to peace negotiations only as a ploy to buy time to stock up arsenals in order to launch further attacks. This assertion was affirmed by Taya Weiss in his *A Demand-Side Approach to Fighting Small Arms Proliferation* in which he stated, "The mere presence of guns undermines alternative conflict resolution strategies. The availability of small arms plays a role in perpetuating violence and making it more lethal at every level, from criminal activity to full-fledge war, in both developed and developing countries."³

This position expressed by the 4362 meeting of the UN Security Council attempts also to summarize the same concern "The destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world increases the

intensity and duration of armed conflict, undermines the sustainability of peace agreements, impedes the success of peace building, frustrates efforts aimed at the prevention of armed conflict, hinders considerably the provision of humanitarian assistance and compromises the effectiveness of the Security Council discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.”⁴

Beyond these multiplier effect of SALW to conflicts, its consequence to post conflict security situation is of no less significance. Increased availability of SALW has in the aftermath of conflicts led to exponential increase in crime rates in the sub region, perpetuating a climate of insecurity. Conflicting figures are available of the volume of SALW circulating the West African subregion but conservatively it is believed that 500 million illicit arms are in existence globally and these are produced in 70 countries of the world.⁵ The United Nations estimates that of these 500 million illicit weapons, 100 million are in Sub-Sahara Africa, with eight to ten million concentrated in the West African subregion alone.⁶

SALW are convenient and attractive to rebel groups and dissident that characterize the West African landscape because they are widely available, very cheap, deadly, easy to use and easy to transport and smuggle. Unlike heavy conventional arms, such as artillery pieces and tanks, which are typically acquired by government forces, small arms transcend the dividing line between government forces, police, soldiers and civil populations.⁷

Similarly, not more than a few hours of training is required to acquire the level of proficiency considered sufficient for the execution of rebel warfare. This reason more than any, perhaps accounts for the large number of children involved in armed conflict in

the subregion, and the severity and brutality of such conflicts. Michael Renner a small arms commentator reports that Africa alone has suffered about 5,994,000 fatalities in the last 50 years due mostly to SALW.⁸ Narrowing the estimate to West Africa, Ero and Ndinga-Muvumba wrote. “In conflicts since the end of the Cold War, while there are no official figures, an estimated 30,000 people have been killed by SALW in conflict each year since the end of the Cold War.”⁹

The suffering inflicted on the people of the subregion by these endless conflicts is only rivaled by one already entrenched by a dysfunctional economy: all but one of the states in the subregion are rated amongst the 15 poorest in the world, with five occupying the least five position in that strata. With per capita income averaging less than 500 dollars more than half of its 230 million people cannot afford to live on more than one dollar a day.¹⁰ This situation is one that continues to pose a paradox for a subregion that is blessed with abundant natural resources; from the diamond fields of Sierra Leone to the vast oil wells of the Gulf of Guinea. This pervasive state of penury is one that has been reasonably attributed to the perpetual state of insecurity in the region. Security as a concept has for the most part remained alien to the deprived peoples of West Africa. The chronicle of liberation struggles, military coups, secessionist wars, and rebel wars afflicting the region runs endlessly as does its associated tales of diseases, poverty and illiteracy.¹¹

The widely held conception of security that continues to restrict it to its military realm fails to adequately address the problem in this region and has regrettably robbed its economic and developmental ramifications deserved attention with dire consequence. The traditional definition of National Security which confines it to its realm of defense from

external aggression has proven grossly inadequate in a region where intra state rifts posses the most threat to national existence.

Any credible discourse on security in West Africa is therefore one that broadens the concept to embody economic development. Former World Bank President, Robert McNamara in this remark buttresses this argument “In a modernizing society, security means development. Security is not military hardware, though it may include it: Security is development and, without development there can be no security. A developing nation that does not in fact develop, simply cannot remain secure for the intractable reason that its citizenry cannot shed its human nature.”¹² McNamara’s position appears to conform with the experience in West Africa where all forms of violence--from street side banditry to international wars--belie an economic expression. Security in this study will therefore take into account the factors of economic security which SALW through its conflagration of violence has gravely undermined.

Amongst other concerns, SALW has despite its notoriety and destructive reputation failed to attract the degree of international commitment it deserves. Major world powers have not demonstrated the degree of resoluteness and unequivocation it has in stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Some scholars expose the irony of this priority by arguing that “nuclear weapons, with all their horror, have not killed since Nagasaki in 1945, while SALW have killed an estimated three million men, women and particularly children since 1990.”¹³ For West Africa, foreign interest in her vast mineral resources and viability of the SALW trade has both been identified as being responsible for the less than sufficient interest of the developed world in stemming this

lethal trade. Concern over the subregion's security is therefore further heightened in the face of her growing profile as a global energy source of the future.

West Africa historically prides itself with a culture of hospitality and respect for human values. Despite the Cloud of violence that currently pervades the region, visitors still attest to a level of reception unrivaled else where. The current climate of violence in the region therefore continues to pose the question of how did the region experience such a dramatic change. Any inquiry into the present state of security in West Africa will at best be superficial without an insight into its political and economic history.

This work therefore also attempts to provide an insight into West Africa's past from the precolonial era through its evolution into modern state structures. The paper also examined the pattern of West Africa's relations with the outside world with the view to offering explanations for its perceived violent nature and current peril.

Though warfare were executed among historic state structures in West Africa the degree of destruction in these wars were no where near the predatory nature of contemporary battle scenes of the region. These traditional wars were executed with moderation and civility. The dynamics of warfare however changed with the introduction of firearms to the subregion by European explorers in the fifteenth century.¹⁴ Early European merchants made their debut into West Africa around the fifteenth century and established a vibrant trade relation with the West African coastal communities.

The primary purpose of this trade was precious metals which were mostly exchanged for finished European goods like cloths and firearms.¹⁵ The discovery of the new world extended the range of these trade commodities to include slaves which for the succeeding centuries became the major object of export from Africa. Slavery was a

business that thrived on violence and frequently the European slave merchants pitted African tribal groups against themselves in order to ignite the chaos that was necessary for the trade to continue to flourish. According to Worger and co “The slave trade had an enormous impact on Africa. It resulted in a great increase in violence within the continent.”¹⁶

Although some scholars have blamed the present culture of violence in the sub region on this slave induced militancy, what is important to this study is the massive use of firearms it introduced into the region and the gun culture it entrenched thereafter. Perhaps even worse, the negative psychological effect it had on the people of the region as a result of the callousness of this trade in human merchandise they were exposed to. In describing this effect Worger said of the peoples psyche “Continual enmity is thus fostered among the Negroes of Africa and all social intercourse between them destroyed; and which most assuredly would not be the case had they not these opportunity for finding a ready sale for each other.”¹⁷ Although one cannot out rightly claim savagery was alien to Africa before slavery, cruelty as manifested in the hot iron branding of slaves that was common with slave trade was hitherto alien to them. The enduring character of such influences was described by Taya Weiss when he said. “Once a culture of violence has taken root it appears irreversible even innate.”¹⁸ The people practically were inured to the atrocities that surrounded slavery and the pattern of subsequent conflicts in the region became literarily transformed.

The end of slavery, far from abating the spate and nature of violence in the region simply restructured it to suit evolving colonial demands. As a legitimate alternative to slavery, the attention of the European merchants was shifted once again to minerals and

agricultural produce of Africa, which were used to feed the booming factories of the industrial revolution in Europe. The clamor for these resources soon manifested in frenzied competition for acquisition of territories and colonies which guaranteed a legitimate claim to these resources. The way and manner the colonialist went about asserting their influence over the newly acquired colonies is viewed by some scholars to have been the bane of the African continent for years to come.¹⁹ The formal partitioning of Africa amongst the scrambling European powers was consummated at the now infamous Berlin conference of 1885.²⁰ The European powers in this conference, arbitrarily delineated the region into political entities under colonial authorities without any regard to their genealogical affiliations, some existing states found themselves thoroughly and dramatically torn apart by this action.

As a result, unrelated and radically heterogeneous peoples found themselves haphazardly merged into the cocktail of colonial states that emerged. The fusion and fission that was inevitable in such union of convenience ultimately sowed the seeds of discord that was to haunt the region for generations to come. Grace Stuart agreed no less with this opinion when she stated. “One of the major causes of post-independence political and military instability in Africa was the failure of the colonization to combine within a given colony, ethnic groups with compatible characteristics; instead the colonial frontiers were drawn purely on the basis of alien strategic and economic interest.”²¹

Such antecedent appears to betray a linkage with the current ethnic and tribal rifts that accounts for much of contemporary African squabbles. Not however denying the fact that ethnic and community conflicts existed in precolonial African settings, the Berlin conference without doubt lumped these groups together in what has been described as

“inherently unstable aggregation” setting the stage for certain implosion. In places where these colonial states came to be established, the colonialist exerted political authority through locals with whom they vested appropriate authority. The problem with such arrangement was that most of such proxies were often discredited individuals who commanded little moral authority over their new subjects. Their allegiance to the colonialist could often be traced to a deep commitment in the slave trade cabal, such antecedent did little to improve the resentment and suspicion with which they were regarded by their subjects. Unfortunately, these proxies with the patronage of the colonialist entrenched themselves and their prodigy into dynastical leadership institutions which reasonably accounts for the widespread resentment and disdain with which political office holders continue to be regarded in Africa today.

More so, the colonialists in consolidating their authority over the colonies were overtly intolerant to opposition. In the view of Somerville, “Colonial rule was imposed on Africans against their will and for the benefit of the colonizer not the colonized. Effectively it was a system created and maintained by the threat or use of force.”²² Historic documents are replete with grotesque descriptions of the brutality with which the colonial masters foisted their will on the colonized.²³

Amputation and mutilation as an instrument of torture was for the first time in the continent demonstrated by the Belgians in their high handed suppression of the Congo. The fact that Africans were once again used to perpetrate such acts of barbarism appreciably increased their level of insensitivity to human sufferings. It will be recalled that this pattern of intimidation was to resurface in the Sierra Leone civil war in which its perpetrators were said to have served as peacekeepers in the Congo.

In the courses of tightening its grip on the colonized peoples of Africa the colonialist stood up military institutions in their various colonies. The primary purpose of such of militaries was to subjugate the locals to colonial submission. Somerville once again provides us with an insight into the nature of such military suppression when she wrote. “The military force used by the European colonial armies was unrestrained by the standard of wars in Europe and was an ever present factor under the colonial system. It was used to build a political and economic system where might is right.”²⁴ The psyche of the colonial military which it bequeathed the national armies of the newly independent African states was therefore one of blatant suppression and impunity. The focus of such militaries was more on domestic control than national defense. Adebajo established this link with the infamous role African militaries continued to play when in a prelude to his account of the Liberian civil war he wrote. “ The 600-strong Armed Forces of Liberia was a descendant of the notorious frontier force, which long had a reputation for pillaging local community and crushing mass uprising.”²⁵ In countries such as Guinea Bissau, colonial high handedness elicited massive resistance against colonialism which developed into a war of liberation. The legacies of such wars, decades after independence include the sea of circulating illicit arms which continues to plaque the region. Most of the arms employed for the liberation struggle are believed to have inflamed the Guinea Bissau’s civil war of the 1990s and continued to serve as major sources for the separatist fighters in Senegal’s Casamance region.²⁶

The tide on colonization in Africa was turned in the wave of political independence that swept across the continent in the 1960s. The euphoria that greeted this emancipation--as it was termed--was short lived. Forty years afterwards, none of the

widely touted economic revolution, self-government was supposed to bring is close to reality. Contrary to expectations the economic fortunes of the region has continued to dwindle. The cronies of the colonists that inherited political leadership soon fell prey to greed and gross abuse of power. The ensuring state of penury instigated a bout of agitation that easily off set the delicate balance that resulted from the colonial arrangement discussed earlier in this chapter. The story for the region has ever since been a tale of woes and distress. The suffering that became inevitable found expression in widespread resort to arms. From the 1960s to present West Africa, has experienced 42 military coup d' etat and other forms of violence that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and maimed millions more.

Thesis Question

The primary question of this thesis is whether there is relationship between the proliferation of SALW in West Africa and the pervasive state of insecurity in the subregion. In essence the hypothesis under test is that increased volume of SALW in the subregion instigates or exacerbates violence and by implication, insecurity. Security in this study is given a broader definition to include economic security. The degree of exacerbation of the state insecurity is viewed in respect of the fact that SALW do not only fuel conflicts but also make resolution of existing conflicts complex and difficult. Secondary questions to be addressed from this are:

1. Is there relationship between small arms proliferation and security in the West African sub region?
2. What is responsible for the proliferation of SALW in West Africa?
3. What are the implications of SALW proliferation in West Africa?

4. What measures should be adopted to control SALW proliferation?

Definition of Terms

West Africa. The region that dominates the western part of Africa between the Sahara desert and the gulf of Guinea. It is politically comprised of the following countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. West Africa forms one of the major subregions of the African region and it is often referred to as a subregion of the African region.

Private Military Company. Corporate entities providing offensive, defensive and advisory military and military related services designed to have a military impact in a given situation. They are typically contracted by governments, agencies, corporate bodies and individuals in situations of conflicts or instability.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to provide useful reference to policy makers in the Subregion, and contribute to ongoing debates on the problem of SALW proliferation. The study will further contribute to existing body of knowledge, while serving as reference material for other researchers on similar topics

¹Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000), 7.

²Comfort Ero and Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, "Small Arms and Light Weapons," in *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region*, ed. Adekeye Adebajo and Ismail Rashid (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 224.

³Taya Weiss, "A Demand-Side Approach to Fighting Small Arms Proliferation," *Africa Security Review* 12, no. 2 (2003): 4.

⁴United Nations, Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, New York, March 2002, 31.

⁵Virginia Gambia, "Governing Arms: The South African Experience," available from Institute for International Affairs; site www.iss.org.za/pubs/Books/govArmsBlurb: internet: accessed 4 December 2006.

⁶UN Report on Small Arms A/52/298 5 November 1997.

⁷Jeffery Boutwell and Michael T klare, "A Scourge of Small Arms." *American Academy of Arts and Science*, 282 no 6 (June 2000):1.

⁸Michael Renner, "Curbing the Proliferation of Small Arms"; available from The World watch Institute homepage; www.worldwatch.org/node/3738; accessed 14 November 2006.

⁹Comfort Ero and Angela Ndinga-Muvumba, "Small Arms, Light Weapons," 226.

¹⁰World Council of Churches, Background Information-Small Arms, Big Impact: A Challenge to the Churches, Geneva, (1998), 57.

¹¹United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report" available from hdr.undp.org/reports/global: internet: accessed 14 November 2006.

¹²Robert McNamara, *The Essence of Security: Reflections in Office* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 149.

¹³World Council of Churches, 42.

¹⁴William H Worger, Nancy Clark and Edward Alpers, *Africa and the West A Documentary History from Slave Trade to Independence* (Arizona: The Oryx Press, 2001), 4.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁸Taya Weiss, 7.

¹⁹Stephen Akintoye, *Emergent African States: Topics in Twentieth Century African History* (New York: Longman, 1977), 2.

²⁰Keith Somerville, *Foreign Military Intervention in Africa* (London: St Martin's, 1990), 2.

²¹Ibingira, Grace Stuart, *African Upheavals Since Independence* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), xi.

²²Somerville, 2.

²³Michael Crowther, “ Whose Dream was it Anyway? Twenty-Five years of African Independence.”*African Affairs*, 86 no 342 (January 1987): 42.

²⁴Somerville, 2.

²⁵Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War, Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 24.

²⁶Adedeji Ebo and Laura Mazal, “Small Arms in West Africa,” *International Alert*; website available from www.international-alert.org/publications/getdata.php?doctypr=pdf&id=75, October 2003; accessed 4 November 2006, 13.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

An attempt will be made in this chapter to review the various conceptual discourses that exist in relation to terminologies associated with SALW; this is in cognizance of the lack of consensus by experts on the subject. A detailed review will also be conducted of existing works, the major problem in this, lies on the opinionated dispositions of writers. This is also reflective of the fact that NGOs and other interest groups have dominated study in this field and positions often tend to represent the interest of these bodies. This study will therefore focus on identifying a neutral position on the subject and striking a balance based on available facts.

Given the interwoven and intervening influence of socioeconomic development SALW proliferation, international economy and security, the study will also analyze works that are central to global political economy and related subjects but will lay emphasis in areas in which they impact on security and reveal any linkage with arms proliferation in the region. Differences in opinion amongst writers is apparent in the view held by some who attribute the current security debacle in West Africa to factors such as a “violent nature of the people” avarice and bad governance and others who blame external influence which they inextricable link to the inflow of illicit arms to the region. Both views will be examine and considered in framing an opinion.

Concept of Small Arms and Light Weapons

There is no universally accepted definition of SALW. This is because the understanding of what constitutes these categories of weapons has undergone some

changes due to the dynamics of technological development. However, good working definitions are available. These tend to describe such arms and weapons either by their configuration, characteristics, size, user perspective or a combination of some of these.

The Royal Military College of Science (RMCS) Handbook on weapons and vehicles defines small arms as follows. “Man portable. Largely shoulder controlled weapon of up to 12.7millimeter (0.5inches) caliber; such weapons generally have a flat trajectory and an effective operational range of 0 to 800 meters although this varies considerably with caliber and weapon type, certain weapons can also provide neutralizing fire up to 1800meters.”¹

The UN panel of government experts on small arms considers SALW as. “Those weapons ranging from knives, clubs and matches to weapons particularly below the caliber of 100millimeter, small arms are those weapons manufactured to military specification and designed for use by one person, whereas light weapons are those used by several persons working as a crew.”² The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs of US Department of State views SALW. “As encompassing manportable firearms and their ammunition primarily designed for individual use by military forces as lethal weapons.”³ It further explains that a typical list of small arms would include selfloading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns.

Michael Renner in his definition considers small arms to be. “Weapons that can be carried by an individual. This includes everything from revolvers and pistols to machine guns, light anti-tank weapons and shoulder fired surface-to-air missiles.”⁴ From a user perspective, Laurence views them simply as. “Those weapons that can be carried by an infantry soldier or perhaps a small vehicle or pack animal.”⁵

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in 1983, enlarged the original Second World War definition of small arms as encompassing. “All crew-portable direct fire weapons of less than 50millimeter and which includes secondary capability to defeat light armor and helicopters.” This NATO definition brings most automatic assault rifles such as the AK-47 series, US M16, the Israeli Uzi submachine gun: as well as all types of rocket-propelled grenade launchers, RPG-7, stinger, machine and submachine guns, and shoulder fired surface-to-surface missiles (SAMs) under small arms category.⁶

It is evident from the above that there is a lack of consensus in these definitions of SALW. In the views of Honwana and Lamb,

There seems to be a lack of consensus in the literature with respect to identifying a small arm as opposed to a standard conventional weapon. This has led to the formulation of an alternative concept ‘light weapons’ which emphasizes a more technologically sophisticated category. However, despite the emergence of the light weapons concept, defining small arms still lacks clarity and even the distinction between ‘small arms’ and ‘light weapons’ is a matter of debate. There seems to be a certain amount of uncertainty as to where small arms end and light weapons begin or whether there is an overlap between the two.⁷

Despite the diverse views held by scholars there remains a commonality of characteristics that permeates the various definitions. According to SA Ocheche , it is from these characteristics that, the concept of small arms and light weapons can be better understood. Citing Lodgard and Fung, he identifies these common elements in all the definitions as follows:

First, the focus is on lethal equipment that is, weapons and their ammunition, generally used by military and para-military forces, excluding items such as knives and hunting rifles. Second, the emphasis is on weapons that are man-portable or transportable by light vehicles, that is, on weight and size of the equipment. Third, this equipment is easy to maintain, can function without much logistical back-up and requires light training for use. Fourth, to be militarily and politically relevant, the definition comprises weapons that are in frequent use that is ‘weapons that actually kill.’⁸

This study agrees with Ocheche's conceptualization of SALW because it is a consolidation of other definitions and therefore adopts it for the purpose of analysis.

Concept of Proliferation

Proliferation is defined as the sudden increase in the number or amount of something. In other words it simply implies rapid expansion or abundance. When used in relation to arms, it describes the spread of weapons, generally, from one country to another. Obasi defines proliferation as the spread of weapons from one group of owners and users to other; this he elaborated could be vertical as in the case of different actors within states already possessing particular weapons, or lateral where the acquisition involves a spread to states not previously possessing them.⁹ However some might argue that the definition appears to restrict the concept of proliferation of arms to such states, whereas arms transfers are known to transcend states, groups and individuals, with multifarious modes of transmission. Acquisition of small arms can be transacted through official channels or, through covert, clandestine or black market networks.

Proliferation of arms is facilitated by certain intermediaries based on legal or illegal demands coming from particular lawless or restricted environments. The Geneva-based organization, Small Arms Survey, maintains, that "SALW do not proliferate themselves... rather, they are sold, resold perhaps stolen, diverted and maybe legally or illegally transferred several time. At each juncture in this complex chain of legal and illicit transfer, people-brokers, insurgents, criminals, government officials and or organized groups are active participants in the transmission."⁹ The UN acknowledges that massive acquisition and accumulation of arms could enhance proliferation. It however, qualifies the accumulation with such terms as 'excessive' and 'destabilizing'

under certain conditions. It noted in the report by the panel of Government Experts on Small Arms, that “The mere accumulation of weapons is not sufficient criterion by which to define an accumulation of weapons as excessive or destabilizing, since large numbers of weapons that are under the strict control of a responsible state do not necessarily lead to violence. Conversely, a small number of weapons can be destabilizing under certain conditions.”¹⁰

For the purpose of this study, proliferation is construed to refer to excessive accumulation and illegal spread of weapons which could have a destabilizing effect on the state. Those in the government stock meant for responsible use by the military for the defense of the state and safeguarding of citizens constitutes legal holdings. There are three broadly established and conventional modes of transferring arms. Legal transfer of arms conforms to all legal formalities usually from one state actor to another or their accredited agents. The second and third avenue is what have been dubbed grey channels or covert transfers. Grey channels, according to Pearson are arrangements by which “government officials look the other way as their agencies arrange for arms to be sent to foreign group and countries for profit, strategic calculation or both,” while black market transfers involve “unlawful transfers by private arms dealers and smugglers.”¹¹

Contemporary Discourse

Causes and Channels of SALW Proliferation

Taya Weiss in his *A Demand-Side Approach to Fighting Small Arms Proliferation*¹² adopted a different approach to addressing the SALW debacle. He advocated for a shift of emphasis to the factors that drive the demand for SALW which he considered would be most critical in addressing the problem. Over emphasis on the

supply in his view missed the mark and represents a distraction from the point.

Buttressing this argument, he notes that. “Suppliers are eager to make profit as long as there is a market they will do good business, no matter how regulated or monitored that market is.”¹³ He infers that even without further production and supply, the circulating volume of illicit arms remains capable of posing significant threat to global peace and security. He cites the example of the cache of SALW that were primarily employed in the Vietnam War which he said have been proven to have resurfaced en masse as far away as Nicaragua and El Salvador where they have continued their destructive trail more than 30 years afterwards. He also alluded to the controversies and contentions that surround gun control which he avers have militated against any concerted global action against firearms control. Weiss further took a cursory look at the various factors that encourage arms demand. He identifies what he terms to be “state-level failure to provide security” as a major cause. He explains that the handicap or ineptitude of government and its security agencies to provide security to her citizens permits the growth of lawlessness, armed robbery and other vices that increases the feeling of insecurity. The logical response to such state of insecurity was a conscious drive to acquiring arms to guarantee self-preservation. He attributed the failure of the state of Somalia in the 1990s to the unbridled arms flows that followed the out break of lawlessness in that country.¹⁴

Beyond the factor of insecurity, Weiss blamed the failure of government policies to provide basic necessities for its young population. The group he also described as the “seemingly never-ending pool of poor disenfranchised, and uneducated young people,” he argues, this groups provide ready recruits for violent or rebel organizations. He employs the analogy of Sierra Leone where despite disarmament, the unemployed youths

still jumped at another opportunity to take up arms at the rekindling of the Liberia's civil war. Elaborating on his demand-side approach to fighting small arms proliferation, Weiss calls for the small arms menace to be regarded as a humanitarian rather than a security issue. He advocates a wholesome approach that will integrate every facet of the society in reversing the conditions that encourages arms acquisition. In his words. "It is not the responsibility neither of the police nor the military nor the defense sector to change environment in which violence thrives and gun seems necessary. . . . Social deterrents to gun-use must include measures that address education and childhood development, promotes social cohesion support high risk group."¹⁵

Besides offering a different view from the over beaten perspective of western economic interest in arms supply. Weiss was forth right in also blaming inept leadership for fostering the conditions that leads to the unending demand for SALW. This fact is particularly very true for West Africa where corruption and administrative recklessness have belied every armed violence.

Hartung and Moix in their article titled "Deadly Legacy: US Arms to Africa and the Congo War,"¹⁶ were highly critical of US involvement in Africa. The paper mocks US rhetoric's of commitment to Africa's development and security while bluntly accusing the US of part responsibility for the devastation afflicting the continent. According to them "The problems facing Africa and her people--Violent conflicts, political instability, and the lowest regional rate of economic growth worldwide--have been fuelled in part by a legacy of US involvement in the region." The paper buttressed this view with statistics from the Cold War in which it cited the US arms and military aid delivery worth over \$1.5 billion to Africa. It lists Liberia amongst the top recipient of

such military wares noting also the role those arms were to play in the countries' notorious civil war. Less complementary was the assertion that. "The US propped up corrupt dictators . . . some of the world's worst human rights abusers and fuelled violent conflicts in Africa."¹⁷ Some of the US arms clients like Liberia, the article continued have turned out to be the top basket cases of the 1990s in terms of violence, instability and economic collapse. The article summed up this phenomenon as the devastating legacy of US policy towards Africa. Hartung and Moix in this submission, by attributing Africa's economic misfortune, violence and underdevelopment to arms build up interestingly asserts a relationship between SALW and security.

Transcending the cold war era, the article also examined current US involvement in Africa. Its views were in this area no less critical towards the military aid the US has continued to extend to African governments. The article singled out for scrutiny, the period between 1991 and 1998 in which it reports US weapons and training assistance to Africa to have totaled more than \$227 million. This figure admittedly includes training assistance to national militaries. It faults the discrepancies in the simultaneous rising volume of such military aid and declining levels of economic assistance to the continent. In comparison with other developed nations, it claimed the US ranked first in global weapon exports but trailing in the last position in the provision of nonmilitary foreign aid to the developing world. The report branded US demands for development and democratization in Africa, hypocritical as it simultaneously increases arms supply while cutting economic assistance to the region. Though the report identifies other major sources of arms to Africa to include France, the United Kingdom and Belgium it called for greater responsibility on the part of the US in assuming a leadership role in curbing

this lethal trade. By way of conclusion, the report declares. “Until the US is willing to serve the interest of long term peace and stability, rather than short term profit and politics, its Cold War policies will live on in Africa --wreaking destruction in places like the DRC and Sierra Leone.”¹⁸

As much as it cannot be claimed that US cold war policy towards Africa was entirely altruistic, its post Cold War relations with Africa is not completely void of it. Hartung and Moix do not appear to be completely dispassionate in their assessment of US military assistance to Africa in the aftermath of the Cold War. The report conspicuously failed to comment on the welcomed impact US military training assistance had on building the capacity of Africa militaries. Its broad condemnation of military assistance to democratic Africa government fails to recognize Africa’s need for a professional military as an antidote to military dictatorship that had tainted its past. Their statement that, “Africa is in a state of collapse now and what it needs is not more military assistance but more development assistance,”¹⁹ lacks sufficient basis. To the contrary, US military assistance to the rising democratic governments of Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal has proven invaluable in fostering military subordination to democratic rule and the projection of peacekeeping capacity to troubled Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is also important to note that a credible military in Africa is what is needed to provide the enabling and conducive environment for economic development to gain momentum. The writers also only mention in passing the rigorous congressional procedures and stringent conditions for scrutinizing US arms export which ensures only democratic responsible governments benefit from such transactions.

Adekeye Adebajo in his *Liberia's Civil War; Nigeria ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa*,²⁰ provides a veritable evidence of the debilitating effects of the end of Cold War to the security of West Africa and the logic of arms flow during the Cold War. In a vivid historic account of the Liberia's Civil War, he leads his readers through the historic political relationship that had existed between the US and Liberia from the 1847 settlement of freed slaves from the United States.

This relationship according to Adebajo enjoyed a boost during the Cold War when Liberia assumed an elevated profile in US jostle for influence over the USSR in the region. Liberia provided the US military with unfettered staging rights to her seaports and airports. In that era of terrestrial communication, Liberia also guaranteed the US much needed strategic communication by hosting the US telecommunication relay station which handled all US diplomatic and intelligence traffic to Africa as well as the VOA transmitter which formed the hub of all VOA broadcast to Africa, the Middle East and parts of South West Asia.²¹ These privileges boosted US reach across much of the third world which at the time formed the Cold War battle ground.

The same Cold War exigency insulated succeeded US administration from the atrocities that were continuously being perpetrated by Liberia's President Samuel Doe. In the face of gross human rights violation and blatant persecution of oppositions, Doe continued to enjoy massive US support. In a state visit to Washington in 1982, Doe was elevated to a liberator status by President Reagan in referring to him as "Chairman Moe." In that era of the Cold War, US strategic interests in Liberia appeared to be more important to Washington than did niceties of human rights and democracy. In the face of growing resentment at home, Doe relied heavily on military support from the US to

brutally keep opposition in check. His policies and economic failures continued to be masked by massive aid from US. “The Reagan administration increased aid to Liberia from \$20million in 1979 to \$90million by 1986, eventually sinking over \$500million, into the ‘Liberia rat hole’ including an annual \$14million in military assistance, by 1986 Washington provided a third of the Liberian government total revenue.”²² US investment in Liberia within the period was curiously the third largest in Africa.

The Curtain on Liberia was practically drawn with the end of the Cold War when according to Adebajo. “It outlived its strategic usefulness to Washington.”²³ The withdrawal of US support inevitably spelt doom for the repressive regime and it invariably gave in to internal pressure. “The sudden withdrawal of US support by 1989 had a destabilizing effect on Liberia, leaving a security vacuum that Charles Taylor’s invasion attempted to exploit.”²⁴ The massive military equipment the US had supplied her helped in fueling the civil war that followed.

Thomas Barnett in his *The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*²⁵ attempts to provide US policy makers a road map for her future global security commitment in a post September 11 world order. Barnett in his analysis classified the world into two broad categories which he terms the core and the gap. His core, comprises of the world’s industrialized nations which have been fully integrated into the network of global interdependence. The gap states on the hand, he considers to be made up of the world’s poor and under developed nations unable or unwilling to break into the global network of inter-relation. Africa by Barnett’s account falls in to this class of gap states, Barnett views the core states as being demonstrably pacifist and highly progressive. He makes a conscious effort at attributing most virtues associated with these

states to a historical connection and relationship with the US military. In making this assertion he declares. “Show me where globalization is thick with network connectivity, financial transaction, liberal media flows, and collective security, and I will show you regions featuring stable governments, rising standards of living and more deaths by suicide than murder . . . show me a part of the world that is secure in its peace, and I will show you a strong or growing ties between local militaries and the US military.”²⁶

For the gap states, Barnett warns of a looming danger and continued threat to US security interests. He surmises the gap states as the emerging global threat and alludes to the sanctuary and breeding ground such states have provided terrorist organizations in the past. Barnett therefore advocates proactive US military engagement with the gap states in order to open her up to the global network of inter-connectivity. For Africa, Barnett recommends “for more aid than the core has offered in the past, and the integration of the gap will ultimately depend more on private investment than anything the cores public sector can offer. But it all has to begin with security because free markets and democracy cannot flourish amid chronic conflicts.”²⁷

Barnett’s analogy betrays some insufficient grasps with Africa’s political and economic environment. Recent events has exposed the naivety in patronizingly cordoning the developing world as to immune the West from her malaise as has been advocated by some Western commentators. The futility of such approach in this era of eroding international boundaries and barriers is evident in the dimension assumed by terrorism, diseases and global migration. This study finds particular interest in the Sierra Leonean war engendered anarchy which provided Al Qaeda with the blanket of impunity under which it traffics diamonds in return for illicit arms. Greater partnership with the West

would in retrospect have denied Al Qaeda such access to funds as well as smolder such supply of arms that exacerbated the war in Sierra Leone. Barnett's accounts fails to consider instances in African where deep-seated relations with the US military had spelt doom for such states at the end of the cold war. The precedence, he accords military cooperation over economic development in Africa is also contestable given the economic undertone to most African conflicts. Barnett appears to view the economic malaise of Africa as a direct consequence of her violent nature.

The Graduate Institute of International Studies in its Small Arms Survey of 2001²⁸ conducted a data analysis that provides empirical evidence of the effects of accessibility of firearms on behavioral pattern of a society. Although this analysis was based on data collected in the US and Japan, this study finds relevance for the analysis it generated in the West African security environment. According to the survey, the easy availability and accessibility to arms could increase cases of homicide in a nation. In a survey on firearms-related deaths in industrialized counties it established that in 1998, the USA with 41 firearms per 100,000 citizen density had 13.45 percent firearms death per 100,000 citizens; in contrast to Japan with a 0.30 firearms per 100,000 citizen ration the firearms-related fatality was a mere 0.07 percent for the same sample size. The study offers this as an explanation for the almost one million firearms-related injuries suffered in the US since the 1960s.

In a report published by the International Alert, Sami Makki and Co examined the role of Private Military Companies (PMC) in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.²⁹ The report identified PMCs to be globally involved in a range of military and intelligence activities spanning, combat operations, combat support operations, and arms

procurement. In these roles, the PMCs were revealed to have directly and indirectly contributed to the demands for arms in the region they operate.

They authors noted the proliferation of PMCs themselves across the world since the 1990s. A phenomenon they attribute to a number of factors stemming from the end of the Cold War, like the massive downsizing of most western militaries and the escalation in intrastate conflict which created power vacuums in some developing countries. This trend the authors averred upset the old order of international arms trade “increasing the number of buyers and sellers, which has allowed a broader and diverse range of actors with necessary resources to access weaponry”³⁰ The resulting liberalization of the arms trade marked a departure from the state dominated era of arms transaction to one of multiple and unaccountable actors which in the authors view have ‘increased the use of arms to fuel conflicts and to facilitate human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law.’³¹

Drawing attention to the security threat PMCs portends to global security. The report posits that PMC’s third party intrusion into conflicts have lead to the protraction of conflicts across the world. This danger is further accentuated by the fact that unlike national forces, there exists presently no international statute regulating the actions of PMCs.³² Although the report identified exceptions in South Africa and the US where regulations on the employment of PMCs exists it noted that the US’ regulatory procedure of PMCs remains a far cry from the rigorous congressional scrutiny interstate arms deals are subjected to in the country.

This report failed to cover specifically the activities of PMCs in West African armed violence. The Sierra Leone civil war reflected amply the role of PMCs in the

proliferation of arms in the region. Besides the direct involvement of the South African PMC the Executive Outcome, the actions of Sandline, a British PMC in the nations Civil War is well documented. Sandline had in conjunction with the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold been incriminated in arms supply to Sierra Leone in violation of a UN arms embargo to the country.³³ Though the British government was to deny involvement in this deal, the involvement of its High Commissioner and Sandline's ties to British secret service continues to subject this claim to skepticism.

Small Arms and Security

Micheal Brzoska and Frederic S. Pearson in their *Arms and Warfare Escalation De-escalation and Negotiation*³⁴ conducted an in-depth inquiry into the dynamics of arms availability and warfare. The paper reviewed a number of wars across various regions of the world and sought to uncover the relationship between arms availability and the likelihood of war. In their analysis, the authors examined the motives for arms supply by producing nations in which they identified strategic interest, which they reasoned to be used by producing nations to bolster friendly states in order to obtain privileges and the commercial motives which according to them is governed by purely business interest. They opined that, where arms supplied is guided by strategic interest; restraint is often applied when such supply appears to be capable of off setting regional balance. The paper cited the example of the gulf region where arms supply was regulated to prevent either Iran or Iraq from emerging as a dominant power in the region. The paper however noted the failure of such policies in the long run also citing the impact these stockpile of arms had in Iraq's subsequent storming of Kuwait and stand off against the global coalition in

1991. Where supply is governed by business interest it reasoned that restraint could only be applied when such supply conflicts with business interest, like incur the wrath of a larger buyer. The paper added that most post cold war arms supply are business driven.

In addressing the relationship between arms and violence, the authors referenced the concept of deterrence which advocates for arms buildup as a panacea to war. It probes the validity in the underlying dictum “If you want peace, prepare for war” by reviewing trends in arms buildup. The authors presented evidence indicating that to the contrary arms buildup had predominantly lead to war. It however caveated that this trend has been mostly observed in conventional conflict situation. It reinforced this finding by employing Singer’s hypothesis that ‘The greater a nation’s military capacity at any time the greater the likelihood of it being involved in war within five years.’³⁵ The authors also offered historical evidence to prove that most wars have been preceded by some degree of arms buildup and rising arms level can aggravate existing tensions leading to armed violence. The writers attributed Saddam Hussein’s intransigence in the face of overwhelming world military might in the 1990s to the confidence he reposed on his massive arms stockpile.

Writing for the Journal of Conflict Studies, Stephen Riley in his article titled “War and Famine in Africa”³⁶ traced the developmental history of Africa from the period of decolonization to the post war era. He chronicled the misfortunes that plagued the continent, from the band of dictators that held sway during the cold war to the wave of intrastate conflicts that greeted the end of the Cold War in this region. Riley attributed the current plight of the region to the negative impact of these past experiences. He also attempted to establish a direct linkage between war and famine whose consequences he

claims is the stunted growth and development of the region. This study finds relevance in this analogy as it relates to security. The reasoning reinforces the argument of the adverse effects of economic deprivation to security. Drawing from Riley's logic, the prevalence of conflicts in the region has compromised not only physical military security but also economic security. According to him, The consequences of these conflicts have been grave: the creation of internal and international refugee populations; the destruction of property; and the destruction, temporary or long term, of the productive capacity of the regions.

Examining specific cases, Riley sites the over 175,000 Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees who were faced with acute starvations in Northern Liberia as a result of that nation's civil war. It is instructive to note that these refugee camps in the coming years formed the spring boards for rebel attacks to Guinea and Sierra Leone lending further credence to Ripley assertion that war consumes resources, National armies, secessionist militaries and rebels bands ought to be perceived as absorbers of scarce resources, which should be more properly spent on health, education or welfare services.

Control Initiatives

Evaluating SALW control measures initiated by various regional bodies, Page and Co in a report for the *International Alert*,³⁷ reviewed the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light weapons in West Africa. The report retraced the violent political history of West Africa citing these antecedents as a motivation for a concerted controlled effort by political leaders in the region. Elaborating on the moratorium, the report lauded its conception as the first of such initiative by a regional organization in curbing SALW proliferation.

By the authors account, the concept was fronted by the president of Mali Alpha Umar Konare out of his country's experience in its successful effort in smoldering SALW supply to the Tuareg and Arab militia in his country based on a similar model. Gaining the endorsement of regional leaders the ECOWAS Moratorium was adopted as a subregional instrument for combating the proliferation of SALW by the ECOWAS heads of government in October 1998. The Moratorium was made to be renewable after every three year period and is composed of the following three main instruments:

- a. The Moratorium Declaration;
- b. The Plan of Action for the implementation of the Program for Coordination and Assistance on Security and Development (PCASED); a UN Development Program (UNDP) sponsored package that provides technical and operational support to the practical development of the Moratorium, and was adopted by ECOWAS foreign ministers in March 1999; and
- c. The Code of Conduct, adopted on 10 December 1999. Its main components include:
 - The establishment of National Commissions in each member state (Article 4);
 - The setting up of structures within ECOWAS to support the Moratorium and to monitor the compliance of member states (Article 5).
 - The preparation of reports by member states 'on the ordering or procurement of weapons, components and ammunitions covered by the Moratorium' (Article 6).
 - The development of a regional arms register and database (Article 6);
 - The harmonization of legislation (Article 7).
 - The training of security personnel (Article 7).
 - The declaration of weapons and ammunition used for peacekeeping operations (Article 8).³⁸

Writing in 2005, the authors' assessment of the Moratorium was cautiously optimistic, they applauded its initiative and its modest achievement and reposed confidence in its future as an effective instrument for SALW control in West Africa. Looking afterwards, although the initiative has spurred the African Union into broadening the framework to cover the entire continent under the Bamako declaration,

the optimism expressed by Page and Co is yet to fully manifest in the implementation in the terms of the Moratorium. Although 14 out of the 15 member nations have established National Commission on SALW, in line with the terms of the Moratorium. Most of these commissions are handicapped by acutely inadequate budgetary allocation and human resources that prevent them from function effectively. Most regional governments have failed to demonstrate sufficient commitment towards adequately empowering these commissions to meet their responsibility.

The effect of this shortfall is that much of the inter state and bilateral coordination supposed to be conducted at the national commission level are left unexecuted. Consequently the requirement to harmonize legislation and the training of security agencies among member nations remained a proposition 9 years after the moratorium.

Soon after the ratification of the Moratorium by member states, evidence began to emerge of violation of the terms by member states. A UN report on illicit arms supply to Liberia in 2001, incriminated Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Guinea for complicity in the supply of arms to various militant factions in the countries armed violence.³⁹ The report revealed that these members states, themselves signatories to the Moratorium have violated the terms of the Moratorium conniving with arms manufacturers in Europe and Asia to channel SALW to Liberia in breach of UN arms embargo on Liberia.

Despite such damning evidence against these states, the moratorium not being legally binding can not be evoked to initiative any punitive action against erring parties. This stands as a great impediment to meeting the objectives of the moratorium.

¹Royal Military College of Science, “Handbook on Weapons and Vehicles” (Shrivenham: 1993)

²United Nations, Report of Panel of Group of Government Experts on Small Arms, A/52/298, New York August 1997.

³Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, US Department of State, “Can Small Arms and Light Weapons Be Controlled” (Washington, DC, June 2001), 12.

⁴Michael Renner, “Curbing the Proliferation of Small Arms;” available from The World Watch Institute homepage; www.worldwatch.org/node/3738; Internet: accessed 14 November 2006.

⁵E. J. Laurence, “Surplus Weapons and the Micro-Disarmament;” available from; <http://www.miiis.edu/cns.html>; Internet; accessed 12 January 2007.

⁶Nnamdi Obasi, “Small Arms and Sustainable Disarmament in West Africa; Progress and Prospects of ECOWAS Moratorium,” lecture delivered at the Command and Staff College, Nigeria, 3 October 2003, 2.

⁷Joao Honwana and Guy Lamb, “Small Arms Proliferation and Drug Trafficking in Southern Africa,” conceptual paper presented at the Center for Conflict Resolution, University of Cape Town South Africa, February 1998; available from ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/staff_papers/guy; Internet; accessed 14 December 2006.

⁸S. A. Ocheche, “Civil-Military Cooperation in the Fight Against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons,” paper presented at a seminar on the establishment of a Culture of Peace, in Abuja Nigeria, 13 November 2002.

⁹Obasi, 5.

¹⁰UN Panel Report, 3.

¹¹Frederic Pearson, *The Global Spread of Arms: Political Economy of International Security* (USA: Westview Press, 1994), 12.

¹²Taya Weiss, “A Demand Side Approach to Fighting Small Arms Proliferation,” *African Security Review* 12, no. 2 (2003): 4.

¹³*Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶William Hartung and Bridget Moix, “Deadly Legacy: US Arms to Africa and the Congo War, Arms,” Trade Resource Center January 2000; available from <http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/congo.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2006.

¹⁷Ibid., 2.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 7.

²⁰Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa* (London: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2002), 23.

²¹Ibid., 34.

²²Ibid., 36.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 195.

²⁶Ibid., 159.

²⁷Ibid., 190.

²⁸Graduate Institute of International Studies, "Small Arms Survey of 2001: Profiling the Problem" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2.

²⁹Sami Makki and others, "Private Military Companies and the Proliferation of Small Arms: Regulating the Actors," *International Alert*; available from www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/issueareas/security; Internet: accessed 19 December 2006.

³⁰Ibid., 5.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 6.

³³Abdul-Fatau Musah and Kayode fayemi, *Mercenaries: an African Security Dilemma* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 60.

³⁴Michael Brzoska and Frederic S Pearson, *Arms and Warfare Escalation De-escalation and Negotiation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 122.

³⁵David Singer, "Peace in the Global System Displacement, Interregnum or Transformation?" in *The Long Post War Peace: Contending Explanations and Projections*, ed. Charles W. Kegley (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 3.

³⁶Stephen Riley, “War and Famine in Africa,” *Journal of Conflict Studies*, no.268 (1994): 14.

³⁷Michael Von Tangen Page, William Godnick and Janani Vivekananda, “Implementing International Small Arms Controls: Some lessons from Eurasia, Latin America and West Africa,” *International Alert* 2005; available from www.iansa.org/documents/2005/MISAC-CrossRegionalReport.pdf; accessed 24 December 2006.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹UN Report of Panel of Experts on Liberia to the Security Council 1343, S/2002/1015, UN headquarters New York, 26 October 2001, 65.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to determine the implication of the proliferation of SALW on security in West Africa. Of special interest to this inquiry, are the numerous bouts of armed violence that have engulfed the region and the specter of unbridled arms flow that is inextricably linked to such conflicts. The degree of devastation inflicted by these arms would form the focus of this analysis with the intent to provide veritable evidence of the implication of SALW to security in the subregion. As much as death tolls from SALW induced armed combat would be relied upon in appraising levels of security, emphasis would as well be laid on other consequences of SALW to human development, human security and national economy in the broader context of security.

The methodology utilized to research and analyze this thesis is structured on an analytical rationale employing both comparative and deductive reasoning. Extensive use was made of the wealth of materials in the CARL Library and the internet. Background information on the region derived from these sources sought to provide a general overview of the subregion's SALW profile *ab initio*.

The presentation of analytical data was conducted by employing two countries in the subregion as case studies. The case studies comprised of Liberia; a country with very high volume of SALW, evidenced by complete outbreak of armed violence and elevated levels of SALW proliferation perpetrated under a climate of impunity. Ghana on the other hand was used as a second case study for its remarkably low level of SALW proliferation. This perception is buttressed by its enduring legacy of stability in the subregion. This case study framework was pivotal in establishing parallels for evaluating

security indicators in the respective context of a SALW endemic country and a nonendemic country, providing a platform for extrapolating on security susceptibility to arms flow in the subregional.

The detrimental impact of SALW to security was assessed not only from the stand point of nation security but also from the context of its direct and indirect consequence on the people of the affected nations. Armed violence prosecuted with SALW in West Africa have earned a notoriety for their propensity to exacerbate poverty, diseases and malnutrition while also denying access to social services and diverting attention and resources from efforts to improve human development and security of the people. Although these impact of SALW are more enduring and devastating, they never seem to earn as much attention as do combat casualty and physical trauma inflicted by SALW. The security impact assessment of SALW in this research will in realization of this fact, comprehensively analyze the effect of arms flow to these often neglected people-centered indicators of security.

Collapse of state institution in Liberia during the period of escalated armed violence militated against the sourcing of credible internally generated data from the country within these periods. In answering the thesis question therefore, the research relied substantially on instrument provided by international bodies like the United Nations Development Program's Human development Report, the World Health Organization's World Health Report and the Human security Center's Human Security Report. These reports were used in concert with other available data on development and economic performance of the case studies nations. Reports obtained from these sources formed the bulk of this research's tool of assessment.

Based on data acquired from the above sources, the research first examined the performance level of Liberia in various elements of security, like national security itself, economic security (addressed in terms of national GDP, development,) and Human security (measurable by considering access to education, health care, forced human dislocation levels and income level of citizens) Liberia's performance level in these elements of security were examined prior to the country's armed conflict and reappraised through the course of the conflict up to its return to normalcy. The latter period, instructively conforms to the period of elevated arms proliferation in Liberia. The result of this analysis is used to represent a trend in the countries performance level prior, and after the period of armed conflict in the areas of study. A progressive performance trend in the security indicators analyzed is deemed to construe a positive correlation between SALW and security while a regressive trend would connote a negative correlation.

The same pattern was later adopted for Ghana through approximately the same period of time. While Ghana has no history of armed conflict, the period of military dictatorship was used as a base line from which trends in security performance were evaluated. Continuous reappraisal of the same security indicators were also conducted over the period of steady democratic growth and stability that followed military leadership in Ghana. The latter period also corresponds with the period of stricter arms control in the country. Finally an analysis of the trend in performance was also conducted to determine a correlation between arms availability and security. In this case a progressive pattern would be construed to connote a negative relationship between SALW and security thereby proving the hypothesis of this study while a regressive trend in security indicators would represent a negative correlation which disproves the

hypothesis. It is hoped that the analysis of the case studies would provide answers to the primary question of this thesis.

The entire work is structured into five chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of SALW and provides a cursory overview of the sociopolitical and security situation of West Africa. It also gives an insight into the origin of SALW proliferation and the gun culture in the subregion while also alluding to other probable causes of instability. Key concepts are defined, and the significance of the study is outlined. The definition of key concepts is critical to the thesis owing to the general held conception of security to merely construe national security and defense from external aggression, this concept is key to the conduct of analysis later in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 2, a conceptual review of the SALW terminology was attempted. This is in cognizance of the lack of consensus by scholars in the application of this term. The conceptual position of this study was clarified in this chapter. Furthermore a review of existing literature on SALW and West African security was conducted with the intent to providing an insight into the dynamics of SALW in general and the subregion in particular.

Chapter 4 details the core analysis of this thesis. It contains sequential analysis of Liberia and Ghana in different contexts of SALW proliferation. Various security indicators for both countries were consequently evaluated to reveal security performance under each context.

Chapter 5 will dwell on the conclusion drawn from the body of analysis presented within the preceding chapters. These conclusions would represent a credible analytical deduction from observed trends and patterns in the analysis of Chapter 4. This Chapter

will also make recommendations as to areas of further research in the context of security in West Africa and measures to stem the proliferation of SALW in West Africa.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Armed violence at the end of the cold war assumed an endemic proportion in much of the countries that constitute the West African subregion. The nature of the devastation that typically accompanied these conflicts plunged the subregion into depths of despondency and stunted growth. No single country was in absolute terms spared the plight of this menace. The degree of this conflagration however varies within the various nation-states of the subregion. Countries like Liberia within the period under review by this study, dangerous come close to total collapse under the impact of such violence. The Liberian violence in turn spilled over to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast inflicting also significant degree of devastation on the peoples and structure of these countries. Other nations like Senegal, Mali and Nigeria despite having made spirited efforts to prevent the spread of civil wars into their countries have continue to be embattled by recurrent bout of armed disturbances and insurrection in sections of their country. The Casamance rebels of Senegal, the dissident group in Nigeria's Niger Delta and the Tuareg militia in Mali all represent the security quagmire that plagues even these nations in the subregions that ostensibly appear to be at peace. Ghana however stands as an exception to this rule, despite its geographical proximity and demographical interaction with its violence afflicted neighbors has inexplicably remained untainted by armed violence, having to contend only with the economic and social impediments arising from harboring refugees from affect states. Since its return to democratic governance in 1992, Ghana has progressively bolstered its security to enjoy a level of stability unprecedented in the subregion.

In answering the primary question of this research this Chapter is organized in two parts. The first part critically examines Liberian political history and analyzes the country's security performance employing indicators reflects all aspects of security through its period of increased arms availability. The second part examines Ghana's security levels using the same parameters for the period coinciding with low arms proliferation in the country.

Case Study One: Liberia

Analysis of Political History

Founded in 1847 by black American settlers, Liberia is Africa's oldest republic. Its history is not surprisingly replete with a number of firsts for the African continent: one of only two African members of the League of Nations and a founding member of the United Nations, Liberia expectedly occupied a preeminent position in the quest for creating a political identity for the rest of the African continent. In addition to lending a voice to the liberation struggle of colonial Africa, its crucial role in forging the Monrovia block of allies in the 1960s (curiously leading regional powers like Nigeria and Ethiopia) lead to the formation of the continental political umbrella, the Organization of African Unity. This regional commitment was also amply reflected in Liberia's pioneering role in the formation of other regional political bodies like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union (MRU). As the only nation that was never under any form of colonial influence, people across the continent eagerly looked forward to success stories in Liberia as an expression of Africa's much fanaticized potentials without the encumbrances of Western colonial influence.

Although these aspirations of an African-driven economic model and an icon of home grown development did not materialize in Liberia, the country continued to advance at a relatively reasonable pace. It capitalized on its historic ties with the US to boost its profile as a major international force in the region, leveraging on this advantage to wield significant influence in regional politics as manifested in its crucial role in the formation of the regional political bodies earlier mentioned. This rapport with the US was consolidated by extending overtures like accommodating vital US strategic installations such as the Voice of America regional transmitter station, the Omega regional maritime navigational station in Monrovia as well as granting in-country staging and transit rights to the US military, a gesture at the time very crucial to US cold war adventure in the region and beyond.

Such diplomatic parley with the US blossomed and transcended succeeding Liberian administration coming to a head during Samuel Doe's radical regime. On assumption of power through a bloody military coup, Doe was strongly vilified by regional leaders for his brutal murder of ousted political figures. He however continued to coast on the bastion of US support to retain international relevance effectively deflecting such resentment. Despite usurping power on the rhetoric's of a populist emancipation, his administration soon started to betray signs of despotism giving in to arbitrariness and policies that ran counter to his very professed ideals. Doe's, unfolding retrogressive policies and its resulting economic failures gradually robbed the administration of any support it had garnered through an antielitist sentiment. Growing opposition to the administration filled it with a deadly paranoia in which persecution of political critics became common place. Doe's paranoia manifested in his loss of

confidence in the nation's military, leading him into seeking questionable international security alliances. Israel was known to have helped arm and train his elite military squad responsible for presidential security under one of such arrangements while he deliberately undermined the rest of the force.¹ Reports were also available of shady arms deal with British arms merchants, such deals were reportedly struck in return for mineral and logging concessions.² These and such other arms stock piles were used to complement wanton supplies from the US which as at 1980 was valued at \$ 278 million.³ By unwitting stock piling arms while systematically weakening the larger part of the nations military, Doe was inadvertently providing the arms with which he was to be routed out of office.

The regime's unpopular political policies were matched by colossal economic failures the effects of which were initially masked by massive US economic and financial aid. "By 1984 Washington was assisting Doe in the payment of teachers salaries and US private investment in the country at \$5 billion was the third largest in Africa."⁴ Despite the cushion provided by the US, Doe's political problems continued to mount and were further escalated by increasing local dissent and international reprehension over his nefarious policy of intimidation and ethic based alienation. Domestic protest and opposition that began to build culminated in half a dozen reported coup attempts against the Doe regime.

Ultimately in 1985, Doe was pressured to concede to an election in which the ruling party ended up being declared victorious by a controversial 50.9 percent of the votes. The regime's inexplicable disqualification of credible opposition candidates from the polls subjected this result to even greater international skepticism.⁵ Following this

questionable electoral victory and the wide spread domestic agitation that welcomed it, Washington was hard pressed to reevaluate her Liberian policy but decidedly ruled in favor of retaining its support for her cold war ally. This position saw further financial assistance being extended to the Doe regime, by Adebajo's account. "After the 1985 elections, Reagan continued to reward Doe by extending \$65million in economic aid,\$11million in food assistance and \$4.7million in military aid. . . by 1986, Washington provided a third of Liberian governments total revenue."⁶ Such tutelage was however not to be for long, unfolding events around the world like the scandal in the US over the Iran contra deal and the escalating political impasse in the Soviet Union simultaneously instilled caution into and degraded US –Liberian relations.⁷ By the turn of the decade, US interest in Liberia had been overtaken by the changing landscape of the world driven by the collapse the Soviet Union which resulting in a sharp decline in US aid and assistance. Military assistance to Sub Sahara Africa for instance dropped from \$247.6 million in 1987 to a mere \$25.25 million in 1988.⁸ Doe therefore was practically abandoned to a piteous fate when he was squarely confronted by the harsh realities of his policies without the usual US buffer.

Doe's politics of ethnic alienation made it easy for disgruntled groups to galvanize support against him. When in December of 1989, his former procurement minister, Charles Taylor struck from across Ivory Coast after receiving military training and support from Libya, his swift military run was predictable. Charles Taylor easily filled his ranks from the Mano and Gio tribesmen whom considered themselves particularly marginalized by the Doe administration and military victory came in its stride.⁹

Taylor's dramatic military accomplishment was a classical demonstration of the exacerbating capability of small arms to conflict. With only a handful of ill trained and poorly equipped AK-47 toting fighters, he rapidly established himself as a military force in the country easily routing the nation's forces. Doe's poorly trained Armed Forces of Liberia proved not match for Taylor's band of irate youths as the Armed Forces of Liberia lost substantial critical military hardware and equipment to the group in the string of defeats it suffered. Taylor's arsenal were substantially enhanced from arms captured from fleeing Armed Forces of Liberia. This cross border incursion of Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) as his group came to be known marked the beginning of one of Africa's bloodiest and most brutal wars.

By the middle of 1990 Taylor and his NPLF forces has earn international recognition both from his reputation as a brutal warlord and the vastness of the countryside under his control. The savagery of this war which did not distinguish between combatant and noncombatant attracted unprecedented media attention but little action from the rest of the world. As Charles Taylor focused on wresting political power from Monrovia he also concentrated on the vast mineral resources of the countryside. Taylor was to demonstrate some dexterity in his skillful use of these resources to guarantee a constant access to arms. The NPLF consequently set up a sophisticated commercial apparatus in its area of control which at the time comprised of all the iron mines, most of the timber region and much of the rubber and diamond mining zones. International transaction in these commodities stocked up Taylor's purse with which he continued to purchase his arms. In 1991 alone he was documented to have netted \$557 million for his export of just timber.¹⁰ With such comfortable income margin, Taylor was

in a good stead to court any arms dealer in the world. Arms flow to NPFL controlled Liberia was documented to be funneled through Libya, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. Although it is difficult to ascertain exact quantity of arms that Taylor imported to Liberia it is believed to be substantial.¹¹

When regional mediatory efforts failed to resolve the crisis, West African Leaders were morally compelled to launch an intervention force. This regional force christened ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) arrived Liberia in August of 1990 fighting its way into the port of Monrovia. Countering resistance from NPFL which had failed to recognize its neutrality, the force became enmeshed in the protracted civil war in Liberia from its arrival into the country. As the fighting escalated NPFL fragmented into countless warring factions with the various factions, reflecting varying tribal interest and affiliations. The NPFL and the United Liberian Movements for Democracy (ULIMO) along with its breakaway faction the ULIMO J (J denoting the Faction leader Roosevelt Johnson) emerged as the dominant groups. Libya, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast appeared and remained on the spot light for much of the war for their roles in providing and channeling foreign mercenaries and SALW with which this war and all the warring factions were sustained.¹² As the war raged, atrocities and human right abuses continued to pile despite the assignation of President Doe at the early stage of the war. Between December 1989 and mid 1993, Charles Taylor's NPLF was estimated to have been responsible for thousands of deliberate killings of civilians. The *African Watch Monitor* in one of its reports described the carnage pervading the country as a 'Human Rights Disaster of monumental proportion.'¹³

These devastations dealt a debilitating blow to the already allying economy and infrastructure of Liberia. Major businesses crumbled and the Liberia lost virtually all its foreign investors.¹⁴ Its mainstay of iron mineral was ruined and the various rebel factions plundered its timber resources to fund their sinister war efforts.

After thirteen failed peace accords the warring factions eventually conceded to a general elections in which major factional leaders were allowed to vie for political offices. The presence of the regional peacekeeping force ensured none of the faction prevailed militarily. Following a joint UN and ECOWAS sponsored disarmament program, democratic elections were conducted in July 1997. Charles Taylor emerged victorious with a convincing 75 percent of the vote in an election that was widely acclaimed to be free and fair.

On assumption of office, the Taylor's administration demonstrated some initial commitment towards an economic rejuvenation but rebuffed international assistance offered to rebuild a nationally based Armed Forces. He preferred rather to retain his rebel NPFL whom shortly earned a dubious reputation for intimidation of political opponents and flagrant abuse of human rights. Charles Taylor also stampeded the regional ECOMOG Force out of his county preventing any international monitoring of a broad based reintegration program. Soon, it was clear that the Taylor administration was going the way of Doe's before it, reports began to emerge of wanton human right abuses and intolerance to political dissent. International concern was heightened by allegations that Taylor was also supporting rebel incursions aimed at destabilizing neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea.

The bouts of counter allegations/accusations that bounced around this charge were punctuated by a fresh rebel attack on Liberia. The Liberian United for Peace and Democracy (LURD) in a manner that replicated the NPFL offensive of the early 1990's again swept across the country side in 2003 to seize larger part of the capital Monrovia. This onslaught heralded what has come to be known as the second Liberian Civil War.

By June 2003 international mediatory effort fronted by the US, Ghana and Nigeria led to the deployment of an international peacekeeping force in the country to restore order. Charles Taylor on terms of the negotiation agreed to take up asylum in Nigeria and Liberia was once again set on the path to reconstruction. A transitional process was put in place leading up to the swearing in of democratically elected president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006.

Analysis of Developmental Cost of Small Arms to Liberia

Despite years of gross mismanagement and misrule, Liberia at the eve of the war in 1989 was still considered prosperous and leveled regional average in performance. More importantly, it held high hopes of progress parading ample natural resources like diamond, iron ore, gold rubber and timber which if effectively harnessed was capable of projecting the economy to greater heights. Sadly, the story thereafter took a drastic turn for the worse. The specter of violence that was to engulf the country stifled all forms of development with trade and the economy grinding to a painful halt. All development supporting institution and structures bore the brunt of the war and its carnage. Successive warring factions not only took turns in inflicting irreparable damage to social and economic structures but systematically plundered and looted the nation's vast resources. Such an affinity for destruction left in ruins much of the Liberia's transport,

communication and public assets sealing any hope a rapid recovery. These violence and pervasive state of insecurity in turn prompted a massive exodus of people amongst whom were the highly skilled and educated with a disastrous consequence on labor and production. Resources fraudulently acquired from the plunder of the nations resources represented not only funds diverted from productive activity but was channeled into acquiring more arms that was used to escalate the state of insecurity.

Liberia increasingly came to bear a disturbing semblance to a failing state; virtually incapable of running effective public institution. Progress was not only stalled but effectively reversed. On the global scene Liberia's Human development Index at the end of the war slide to a miserable 0.276 (rated on a scale of 1 to 0), one of the lowest in the world--beating only Sierra Leone, itself afflicted with armed violence. The figure represents a decline from prewar 0.311. Access to social services is rated to be less than 30 percent of prewar level and HIV prevalence is at an alarming 8.2 percent, resulting largely from the collapse of health institutions and the absence of an organized control program.¹⁵ Liberia's literacy level also dropped to a mere 37 percent. Human levels of poverty in the country is like others amongst the worst in the world. Even for a region as deprived as West Africa, Liberian's live in penury and squalor, life expectancy at birth stands at 40. Sadly at the end of the war, Liberians look back to the days of Samuel Doe's misrule with nostalgia as one of their glorious days.

Impact of SALW Proliferation on Liberian Economy

Having reviewed the political history and the arms buildup in Liberia the next analysis in this case study examines the impact that these massive arms buildup that spanned two decades of armed violence have had on the economy of the country.

The UNDP report of the Liberia's economic state as at 2001 quoted below sums up the degree of reversal the economy suffered.

The country's GDP estimated at US\$508 million is about 50 percent of prewar level (1987) of US\$1 billion. The national budget for the fiscal year 2000/2001 of US\$90.7 million is only one third of the pre-war 1988 budget of US\$ 340 million. The country's external debt arrears of US\$ 2.5billion is 821percent of GDP and 200 percent of export earnings respectively. The per capital income dropped from US \$340 pre-war to US \$199. This dismal performance is attributed to national insecurity, poor investment climate, and poor macroeconomic policies.¹⁶

Specifically, poverty level of over 80 percent in Liberia (measured as the ratio of the population living on \$1 per day) is the lowest in the region¹⁷. GDP as at the last available record in 2002 is \$500 million even lower than the \$508 million level attained in 1999 and a far cry from prewar level of \$1 billion--another painful indicator that respite will be long in coming. The prognosis is similar for other sectors of the economy.

Agriculture which accounted for roughly 23 percent of prewar GDP declined significantly during the period of the war Yields from the once flourishing timber and rubber industry dipped below 1989 level with negative impact on GDP. Food production is also critically down to 70 percent of prewar levels. This shortfall in food production subjects the people to massive dependence on food importation and foreign donation, a situation which poses enormous threat to food security. Presently, food importation, mainly rice, amounts to one third of the nation's total import a direct consequence to the forced displacement of the people as a result of the wars with its adverse impact on farming and food production.¹⁸

Liberia's mining sector was at the eve of the war very robust, contributing 12 percent of the GDP. This sector of the economy was not only devastated during the period of conflict but was also pillaged and plundered by the various warring factions. By

2003, its contribution to the GDP had dropped to just 0.082 percent. Iron ore mining which is heavily capital intensive was closed down because of the damage the war inflicted on the infrastructure necessary to support production. Diamond and Gold mining continued through out the period of the war under feudal control of the respective factions controlling such areas. Proceeds from the trade of these minerals were used by these factions to fund their war efforts. Even At the end of the war, exploitation of these resources have continued by rouge elements emboldened by the inability of government security institution to exert control or enforce mining regulations across these remote mining zones. Table 1 shows Liberia's five major sectors of the economy, agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing and services (tertiary) and their respective contribution to the national GDP from the eve of the war in 1988 to the end of the war in 2003. The progressive decline in the respective sectors of the economy is evident in table 1.

Although Liberia has never been a reckonable manufacturing nation, its limited manufacturing capacity was completely destroyed by the war.

Liberia's export trade also witnessed a dramatic depreciation over the period of the war. At the end of the war export dropped from prewar levels of \$460 million to \$108.7 million in 2003. Of this amount, 94.8 percent was derived from rubber and timber export. The war has not only been responsible for the collapse of iron ore mining but also the less than impressive contribution of other commodities like cocoa and coffee to the export trade quota to GDP. The country's import was also not unaffected by this decay, it declined from a prewar high of \$481 million to \$400million in 2004.¹⁹ Collectively trade balance has been negative since the end of the war, the 2004 deficit stood at 50.8 million

dollars. The effect of such a large deficit for an economy as Liberia is a decline in purchasing power with its attendant adverse effect on human development.

Table 1. :Sectoral Contribution to GDP 1988-2003							
Sector	1988	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
AGRICULTURE	212.3	229.4	277	289.5	301.1	311.3	319.7
Rubber	86.6	37.6	61.7	64.8	68	69.4	70.8
Coffee	2.2	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.2
Cocoa	11.4	1.6	2	2.5	3.1	3.9	4.5
Rice	9.9	64.2	72.5	76.1	78.4	80.7	83.2
Cassava	33.4	44	48.4	50.8	53.4	56	58.8
Others	68.8	81.5	91.7	94.5	97.3	100.2	101.2
FORESTRY	82.3	53.4	60.7	63.7	66.9	68.3	69.6
Logs and Timber	62.2	13	19.3	23.2	27.8	32	36.8
Charcoal and Wood	20.1	40.4	48.4	50.8	53.4	56	58.8
Mining	121.5	8.6	9.8	9.9	10.1	10.1	10.3
Iron ore	108.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	13.1	8.6	9.8	9.9	10.1	10.1	10.2
Manufacturing	78	17.3	21.4	24.1	26.5	28.3	30.3
Tertiary sector	475.5	58.5	82.6	97.1	108.7	119.9	130.2
Electricity and Water	12.4	1.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.7
Construction	45.4	5.6	6.9	8.5	10.3	11.8	13.6
Trade, Hotels, etc.	89.6	11	17	18	19	20.1	21.3
Transportation and	136.9	16.8	21.6	27.8	13.6	37.4	41.1
Communication	88.8	10.8	13.3	15.3	17.6	19.3	21.3
Financial Institute	50.4	6.2	11.2	12.3	13.61	14.4	15.1
Government Services							
Other Services	51.9	6.4	10.3	12.9	13.7	14.4	15.1
Imputed Bank	27.1	2.3	3.2	3.7	5	7.8	9.7
Charged (Less)							
GDP at current Prices	942.5	364.9	448.3	480.6	508.3	530.1	550.3

Source: Liberian Ministry of planning and Economic Affairs.

Consequently inflation at the end of the war has risen to about 15 percent, this has further exacerbated the economic difficulties of the people particularly as income levels have remained largely constant and practically one of the worst in the region. Inferring for an example provided in a UNDP's report. "A resident physician at a general hospital receives 4,600 Liberia dollars (US \$ 82.14) per month." Such income in the face of the

ever escalating market prices worsened living conditions for even the few that can boost of wage paying jobs. As a result Liberia is rated by UNDP to be among one of the most food insecure countries in the world with an estimated 40 percent of its population undernourished.²⁰

Analysis of the Impact of SALW on Access to Social Amenities in Liberia

Besides widespread poverty that permeates all segments of the Liberian society, the dilapidated condition of the country's social amenities and utilities also adversely affects living condition and militates against economic activities. Much like other sectors of the society, armed violence had taken its toll on the nation's social amenities and utilities. Power generation which stood at 500million kilo watt in 1989 was reduced to nothing with the destruction of the mount coffee hydro plant and the Monrovia generating Station by the War. Following which, the few businesses that survived the violence but depended on electricity for operation were sadly put out of business.

Public water facility experienced a similar fate throughout the course of the war. In 1989 about 45 percent of city dwellers had access to pipe borne water while the proportion of rural dwellers with such access was put at 23 percent.²¹ Carnage and devastation resulting from the war disrupted services in all the facility with dire consequence to public health. With the 1990s lull in battle, activities resumed in some of these plants again raising access to safe drinking water to 11.2 percent in the urban areas and a meager 4.1 percent in the rural areas. At the resurgence of violence once again in 2003, service was again stalled. Presently there is virtually no pipe borne water supply in Liberia, perhaps the only country in the world that cannot guarantee safe water supply to

its citizen. The Liberia's populace as a result depends on questionable source of water for survival. According to a UNDP report, 82 percent of Liberians households depend on untreated well, ponds and rivers for their daily water supply.²² Dependence on such unverifiable sources has its adverse impact on public health. Such unhealthy living practice has increased the prevalence of water borne diseases such as typhoid, cholera and diarrhea.

Also related to public health is the deplorable state of waste management facility in the country. The limited waste management facility available in the country prior to the war was like other public utility vandalized. Most households as a result, simply dispose of their garbage on the street side which in most cases are dangerously close to dwelling places. Since there exists no public facility for central disposal of these wastes they generally remain there with grave consequence to public health.

The war induced decay in the Liberia health care sector had impacted the Liberian people perhaps more than any other sector. At the eve of the war, the country had on record, 325 government approved health facilities that were operating at various capacities. At the end of the war in 2003, over 95 percent of these had ceased to exist. Besides the physical damage to health infrastructure, the prevailing state of insecurity also contributed to the loss of skill manpower in the medical sector. According to UNDP "Prior to the war in 1989, there were about 400 trained medical doctors working for the government but that number was reduced to 87 by 1997 and less than 20 by mid 2003 when the Liberian Civil War ended."²³ The picture is similar for other paramedical staff. The effect of such significant loss in medical capacity at the time the war was not only inflicting physical trauma on the people but also destroying all support facility was

to increase peoples vulnerability to health hazards. These factors have been responsible for the increased prevalence of major diseases and health conditions in the country. Liberia's Human development index bears testimony to this fact, it puts child mortality at 194 in every 1000 births and maternal mortality is 574 in every 100,000 live births. The present spread of HIV/AIDS in the country could also be attributed to the grossly insufficient control program resulting from the lose of capacity in the health sector.²⁴

The protracted armed violence in Liberia has done more to retrograde development by wrecking the educational system in the country. For most part of the conflict, schools and colleges and other training institutions were closed. Within the period many teachers and school administrators were ether killed or dislocated to safer regions within or outside the country. School buildings in war affect areas were converted to displaced peoples homes. Over 75 percent of educational infrastructure is estimated to have been rendered unusable by the war.²⁵ The cost of these loses in educational manpower and resources is reflected in the very high rate of illiteracy amongst the youths of this country. By UNDP's estimation more than half of the children of school age are out of school. Of the other half in school, 75 percent are being taught by unqualified teachers. This startling deficiency generates a specter of redundancy in youths of school going age that is filled by vices that has proved very costly for the nation. The very high rate of children involved in the Liberian armed conflicts can not therefore be unconnected with this. Beyond the possibility of perpetuating the climate of violence, lapse in educational capacity has created a vacuum which poses a serious threat to the resuscitation efforts of all other sectors Human development. "As noted in a UNDP

report “Education is not only basic human right but one that sets a foundation for progress in other human development areas such as health, security and freedom”

Human Security

As national security progressively deteriorated in the course of the nations arms build up, human security was systematically eroded. While it may be easy in retrospect to statistically quantify the human tragedy in the toll of the more than 750 million people that were killed and 1.3 million more that were similarly displaced,²⁶ accounting for other forms of atrocities that befell the people is less easy. Figures lack the capacity to convey the emotion of the derivation the people suffered in psychological trauma. Accounting for loss in human right and human dignity is equally as difficult as accounting for the eternal damage inflicted on children by their exploitation by the war. Four years after the war, Liberia is still rated by the Human Security Center as the least secure nation in the world with the highest rate of fatality from political violence.²⁷

The abuse of Human Right that characterized the brutal war continues up till the last audit of the report in 2005. The spate of violence and lawlessness that was associated with the war was promoted by the unbridled climate of impunity in which all groups in the conflict operated. Throughout the war successive humanitarian reports filed by NGOS operating in the country were consistent with their report of widespread acts of violence, intimidation and exploitation against defenseless civilians.

Deserving particular attention is the degree to which women and children were exploited and abused. Their plight provoked this remark by the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan. “Children continue to be the main victim of conflict. Their sufferings take many forms. Children are killed made orphans, maimed abducted,

deprived of education and healthcare, and left with emotional scars and trauma. Forced to flee from their homes, refugees and internally displaced children are especially vulnerable to violence, recruitment, sexual exploitation, diseases, malnutrition and death, children are being recruited and used as child soldiers on a massive scale. Girls face additional risk particularly sexual violence, these egregious violence of children's rights take place in pervasive climate of impunity.”²⁸

Kofi Anan pretty much summed up the condition of not only children in Liberia but of all those that were affected by this carnage. About 21,000 children were estimated to have been forcibly recruited as child soldiers in Liberia. Having been used to perpetrated acts of violence and denied access to education, they children come out of the war not only confronted by a bleak future but also a hostile society who stigmatize them for their past. Violence against women assumed an endemic proportion during the war, girls and women were abducted and forced to join fighting forces as fighters and sex slaves.²⁹ The mentality of violence that has been entrenched on these young Liberian men and women continues to pose a serious danger to the nation's security even at the present cessation of hostilities.

Case Study Two

Analysis of Political History of Ghana

Ghana as a nation caught international attention when it won its independence in 1957 becoming the first of the European colonized nations in Sub Saharan Africa to be so privileged. Its inspirational leader Kwame Nkrumah immediately set the country on a path towards rapid industrialization, an effort that resulted in significant economic growth.³⁰ Nkrumah also gained international prominence for his radical crusade for the

“total liberation of Africa” and his avid support for a politically unified post colonial Africa. Earning a reputation as a revered continental statesman, Nkrumah remained a leading figure in the formation of the Organization of African Unity despite failing to sway member States into adopting his dream concept of a unified political and defense structure for the continent.

His administration and vision for Ghana were however short lived. In 1966 he was toppled in a military coup that ushered in 25 years of military rule in Ghana, albeit punctuated with bouts of experimentation at civilian democracy.³¹ With that median coup d’ etat in 1966 Ghana’s military joined the frenzy of military intrusion in to politics that was sweeping across the region and consequently took on every pretext to justify an intervention through the barrel of the gun. Like most other countries in the region, bad governance and inept policies emanating from such military adventures in politics lead to economic decline and widespread poverty providing successive coup leaders with ample justification for yet another violent rise to power.

In 1982 Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings assumed the mantel of the nation’s leadership for a second time after his second coup d’etat in a row.³² His administration steadily metamorphosed from an authoritarian posture to an inclusive one, a process that culminated in a democratic election in 1992. Although the results of this election only sought to endorse Rawlings as the democratically elected President, subsequent elections were widely seen to have been free and fair. Gaining such international endorsement, Rawlings progressively moved towards opening up the polity to multi party democracy. The regime also pursued a vigorous transformation that sought to restructure its allying economy. This transformation similarly saw the military being actively

reprofessionalized, a process that has turned Ghana's armed forces into one of the most professional in the region with a growing reputation for efficiency in International and regional peacekeeping operation. By such move, the armed forces' focus was diverted from politics giving democracy the much needed opportunity to consolidate in Ghana.

Today Ghana has conducted a series of very successful elections including one that remarkably transferred power from the ruling party: a feat yet to be peacefully achieved by any other in the region. Presently Ghana, convincingly stands head and shoulders above the rest in its achievement in governance and democracy. Political successes have engendered constructive economic policies leading to impressive economic gains and stability.

With respect to stability, Ghana enjoys a unique history in the region: one untainted with any civil strife. Surrounded by nations enmeshed in series of political turbulence and violent conflicts, Ghana has been often described a peaceful island in an ocean of crisis. Its own experience with the menace of SALW is largely limited to the series of military coup it experienced earlier in its political history. Curiously, armed violence in the Ghana's neighborhood had devastated much of the countries spilling from one to the other and forth. Ivory Coast is presently in turmoil, while Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are yet to fully recover from their immediate past experiences. In this entire conflagration Ghana has played a significant role not only in mediation but also provided refuge for the over 48,000 dislocated war affected persons. Despite such degree of proximity and interaction with its violence ridden neighbors, Ghana has remained inexplicably insulated from the vortex of violence whirling around it. Observers have

attributed such an amazing degree of immunity to violence in the country, to the relative low volume of SALW circulating in the country.

It will be however be inaccurate to assert that Ghana is completely void of illicit arms. Like the rest of her neighbors, SALW availability continues to pose a serious challenge to security but at a degree significantly less than any other. The era of military rule in the country was characterized by lax enforcement of weapons control regulations by the military which condoned proliferation within the military ruling class and amongst their civilian cohorts.³³ The country's local small arms production capacity which is believed to be quite advanced attracts similar attention. There is presently no credible estimate of the volume of illicit SALW in Ghana but it is generally known to be substantially low and significantly less than others in the subregion.

The country has in recognition of the destructive potential of SALW evolved aggressive mechanisms to check proliferation. Such measures are targeted against local production and possible cross border infiltration from other countries in the region.

Developmental Trend of Ghana

Ghana has since its return to democratic governance enjoyed a climate of stability touted as legendary in the West African region. This achievement is no doubt accentuated by the specter of violence that continues to pervade its neighbors in the region. In the midst of such turmoil the country has undauntedly gone ahead to consolidate on democratic governance and economic gains. In stark contrast to Liberia and other SALW infested nations in the region, Ghana's economy and standard of living has continued to show evidence of improvement. Infrastructural development had also spiritedly attempted

to keep pace with the economic advances thereby creating an enabling environment for foreign direct investment.

Ghana possesses the best indices in human development levels in the region as derived by the office of the United Nations Development Program. It achieved a reduction in poverty level from 52 percent in 1992 to 35 percent in 2005 and remains the only West African nation on track to attaining the Millennium Development Goals target of halving poverty by year 2015. The percentage of Ghanaians that have access to primary education as at 2005 is an amazing 92 percent, way higher than any other in the region.³⁴ It is also the only country to have in spite of the HIV/AIDS scourge raised life expectancy to its present level of 57 years while also holding HIV prevalence rate to only 3 percent. Ghana was as at 2006 ranked 136 amongst the 178 countries profiled by the UNDP in its human development report in the order of development. Its ranking is the highest in the region with Liberia and Sierra Leone at the very bottom of the list.³⁵ The world bank in its rating system, the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) ranks Ghana amongst the highest in Africa and the highest in West Africa. Transparency International also rates Ghana as the least corrupt nation in West Africa.³⁶

Ghana's economic attainment like its developmental strides stands out in West Africa. "Economic growth has averaged 4.8 percent from 1983 through 2000 but accelerated to 5.8 percent in 2004 and 6 percent in 2005."³⁷ Domestic debt ratio has been on the decline dropping from 23.7 percent in 2002 to 10.8 percent by 2005.³⁸ Agriculture which like in the rest of the region is the largest employer of labor contributing about 48 percent of the nation's GDP experienced an impressive growth rate of 7.5 percent, in 2004

production in agriculture had been boosted by government agricultural policies aimed at pest and disease control.³⁹

The growth in manufacturing sector had also been positive but less rapid than agriculture, its growth in 2004 stands at 5.1 percent accounting for 21.5 percent of GDP. Investment in the manufacturing sector has been largely due to increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the agricultural produce processing industry.

Infrastructurally, Ghana boasts of a road network of about 50,000 kilometers. “Road conditions have improved from 23 percent good, 27 percent fair and 50 percent poor in 2001 to 40 percent good, 30 percent fair and 30 percent poor in 2004” a span of just three years.⁴⁰ Its seaport and airport are also the hub of commercial transport in West Africa. Presently Ghana’s international airport is one of the only three in sub Sahara Africa where flights can originate and terminate in the US, a gesture informed by safety and security standards. The Seaport in Tema has an enormous loading capacity of over 14 million metric tons, second in the subregion only to that of Nigeria.⁴¹

Tourism, perhaps the best indicator of a nation’s level of security has experienced a tremendous growth in Ghana. According to the world tourism organization, Ghana is the fastest growing tourist destination in West Africa with a growth rate of 24.4 percent this rate almost doubles that of the rest of the region put together.⁴²

Similarly Ghanaians enjoy the highest rate of access to electricity in Sub-Sahara Africa with the exception of South Africa. Its electricity consumption per capita in kilo watt hours as at 2003 was 285 according to UNDP Human development report. Other west African nations, Niger, Sierra Leone and Mali trail the rest of the world in this report. Liberia even failed to be considered by the report.

In the field of education, Ghana continues to blaze the trail, as mention earlier, access to primary education in the country is at 92 percent, its institutions of higher learning are also reputed to be the best in the region. Universities enrollment as a result has been on the rise serving but local and regional needs.

On the diplomatic scene, Ghana's international profile has risen exponentially within this decade. The Country has come to play crucial roles in West African mediatory efforts for the resolution of many of the raging political conflicts in the region. Ghana's president John Kufour was in the forefront of the region's mediatory effort for the resolution of the Liberian and Ivory Coast internal conflicts. The confidence regional leaders now repose in the country is also clearly manifested in their acceptance of his double term leadership of the West African political body, the ECOWAS. Within the continent and beyond, Ghana has won considerable admiration for voluntarily submitting itself to international scrutiny under the African Union peer review mechanism. An instrument conceived by African heads of government under the auspices of the African Union, providing a platform for checking excesses in governance by mutually evaluating levels of transparence and accountability of member nations. Ghana was instructively the first country to open up to such international scrutiny. The country has in the last year also been elevated to the chair of the African Union, yet another reflection of its growing status in the region. Outside Africa, the world powers have been also warming up to Ghana's rising profile in the region. This status has attracted notable world leaders to the country. The country has in the last two years been privileged to host amongst other, heads of government from China, Britain and Germany. British Tony Blair's visit was the first by a British Prime Minister since Harold Macmillian's in 1960 and Schroeder's the

first by a German Leader since independence.⁴³ Table 2 below captures the development status of Ghana and 13 other countries in the subregion as at 2002 comparatively reflecting performance in 5 human development indicators.

Table 2. Development status of West African Countries 2002.						
Country	HDI Ranking	Life Expectancy at birth(years)	Adult Literacy (percent)	GDP per capita(PPP) US \$	Human Development Index (HDI Value)	Population (millions)
Benin	158	53.8	37.4	990	0.420	6.8
Burkina Faso	169	46.7	23.9	976	0.325	12.6
Cote D'Ivoire	156	47.8	46.8	1630	0.431	16.8
Gambia	160	46.2	36.6	1649	0.405	1.5
Ghana	129	56.8	71.5	1964	0.548	20.3
Guinea Bissau	167	44.8	38.5	755	0.349	1.4
Guinea Conakry	159	47.5	41.0	1982	0.414	6.6
Mali	164	51.5	41.5	797	0.386	11.4
Niger	172	45.2	15.9	746	0.277	10.6
Nigeria	148	51.7	63.9	896	0.462	5.6
Senegal	154	53.3	37.3	1510	0.431	5.3
Sierra Leone	173	38.9	36.0	490	0.275	
Togo	141	51.8	57.1	1442	0.493	
*Liberia	NA	40.3	37	508	NA	3.1

Source: Human Development Report 2002, UNDP. Collation of data from Liberia was impeded by armed violence.

This chapter analyzed the implication of the proliferation of SALW on security in West Africa using case studies of Liberia and Ghana. The chapter reviewed both

countries' security indicators under a SALW endemic setting for Liberia and examined Ghana's security indicators under a condition of low arms availability. After an in-depth analysis, Liberia presented evidence of significant decline in all security parameters examined. Ghana on the other hand revealed a continuous improvement in these security parameters leading to a conclusion that SALW availability negatively affects security.

From relatively positions of parity in the 1960s Liberia and Ghana now manifest radically different status in the subregion. Liberia today stands as a symbol of disaster and offers other nations in the region a lesson on the consequence of SALW. Its experience of nationhood of over 150 years fizzled in the mist of the 14-year armed violence and unmitigated access to SALW today Liberia is a nation attempting to rebuild from the scratch. Ignominiously it has on two occasions relied on the very countries it helped liberate from colonial bound to rescue it from its depth of despondency. Democracy is once again in its infancy in the country and its security continues to be haunted by the atrocities of the past. Government institutions under the current President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf are acknowledged to be picking up but the issues of infrastructure and the people's corrupted psychic will take along time to be reoriented. More so, the future of the nation will continue to be uncertain unless the question of SALW is comprehensively addressed.

¹William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Colorado: Lynnee Rienner Publishers, 1999), 88.

²Ibid., 89.

³Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War, Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa* (London: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2002), 34.

⁴Katherine Harris, *African and American Values: Liberia and West Africa* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 76.

⁵David Harris, "From Warlord to Democratic President: How Charles Taylor Won the 1997 Liberian Election" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (September): 431.24.

⁶Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*, 36.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹The Liberian Civil War; available from; www.globalsecurity.org/intel2006rnet; accessed 15 December 2006.

¹⁰Reno, *Warlord Politics*, 97.

¹¹Adedeji Ebo and Laura Mazal, "Small Arms Control in West Africa;" available from; www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/country/afr_pdf/africa; internet; accessed 15 December 2006.

¹²Weapons Sanctions, Military Supplies, and Human Suffering: Illegal Arms Flows to Liberia and the June-July 2003 Shelling of Monrovia. A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper November 3, 2003.

¹³The Liberian Civil War; available from; www.globalsecurity.org/intel2006rnet; accessed 10 November 2006.

¹⁴Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Profile-Liberia 2003," The economist homepage ;available from www.eiu.com;internet; accessed 14 February 2007.

¹⁵United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report 2001.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷United Nations Development Program, Liberia Economic Review 2000-2001.

¹⁸Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments 2006- *Liberia*.

¹⁹United Nations Development Program, Mobilizing Capacity For Reconstruction and Development-National Human Development Report 2006 Liberia.

²⁰UNICEF, At a Glance: Liberia, available from; www.unicef.org/infobycountry/Liberia; Internet; accessed 28 December 2006.

²¹United Nations Development Program, Mobilizing Capacity for Reconstruction and Development, National Human Development Report 2006 Liberia.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report 2001, UNDP.

²⁵United Nations Development Program, Mobilizing Capacity for Reconstruction and Development, National Human Development Report 2006 Liberia.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Human Security Center, “Country Report- Liberia,” available from; www.humansecurityreport.info; Internet; accessed 12 December 2006.

²⁸United Nations, Children and Conflict, Report of the Secretary General, UN Doc. A/58/546-S/2003/1053, 10 November 2003, Para. 24.

²⁹Amnesty International, Human Right Report, 17 May 2004, AFR 34/006/2004.

³⁰International Development Association, “Ghana: Accelerating Growth to Halve Poverty;” available from; <http://www.worldbank.org/ida>; internet; accessed 20 February 2007, 2.

³¹Jane’s Sentinel, Country Risk Assessments, 2006, Ghana.

³²Ibid.

³³Ghana Country Report to UN Department of Disarmament-2005.

³⁴Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), International Monetary Fund and World Bank Report.

³⁵USAID/GHANA, Strategy Statement: Empowering Ghanaians Through Partnerships to Build a Prosperous nation, 9 March 2006.

³⁶World Bank, Ghana: Scaling Up for Stronger Growth; available from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGHANA/Resources>, 21 June 2006; accessed 15 January 2007.

³⁷International Development Association, 2.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), African Economic Outlook; available from www.oecd.org/dev/publication/africanoutlook; Internet; accessed 20 January 2007.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ghana: A Country with a Vision; available from www.searchwinne.com; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Roger S. Cocking, *The History of Ghana* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005), 272.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

While the end of the Cold War heralded an era of seamless international cooperation and increased global economic productivity, this era, was in West Africa characterized by a surge in tragic armed violence and internecine destruction. The devastation such violence inflicted on the subregion is evident in its present state of economic and social despondency which today places the subregion in the club of the poorest and most violence afflicted in the world. The plight of the subregion has led many observers and policy makers into seeking measures for not only resolving ongoing conflicts but also preventing future ones as a panacea to the region's manifold problems. SALW as the primary weapon of conflict in the region attracts significant attention in the discourse on armed violence in West Africa as in much of the developing world.

In answering the primary question of this research being: to determine if there is a relationship between SALW and security in West Africa, this study analyzed the conflicts in the subregion by examining two countries with relatively similar political antecedents but different levels of SALW availability and dramatically different security experiences.

This analysis revealed that the degree of availability of SALW in a country is directly related to the degree of insecurity in the country. In other words, the more the volume of SALW in a country, the higher the probability of the country experiencing a deterioration in its state of security.

Comprehensively, the study also identified causes of conflicts in West Africa to span many other factors and found the nature of the region's conflict to be also

intrinsically shaped by the subregions political history and social dynamics. Principally, colonialism by its nature of oppressive subjugation bequeathed a legacy of authoritarianism to post-colonial African political leadership. The African political class that inherited power from the colonialist essentially did not represent the most credible leaders in African society. Such leaders were practically foisted on the people of the emergent African nations for colonial imperialistic interest. Lacking credibility and a moral base for power, these leaders found it convenient to resort to the same high handed tactics their colonial mentors had employed in keeping their subjects in check.

More so the complex entities that were amalgamated into post-colonial state structures by the colonial powers were by their very heterogeneous and conflicting nature a recipe for disaster. No consideration was given to unit compatibility or the desires of the ethnic unit that were merged together as nation states. In some cases tribes that found themselves together had shared a history of deep seated animosity while some homogenous ethnic units were severed by international boundaries. The ensuing struggle for supremacy and cross border affiliation amongst rival and severed groups has remained a source of instability in the region.

Four decades after earning political independence, African can not justifiably continue to blame colonialism for much of its woes having had the opportunity to rid itself of its debilitating vestiges. Unfortunately, succeeding African administration have failed to initiate policies that are capable of turning around the fortunes of these nations. Most African political leaders have fallen prey to politics of acquisition and exclusion that effectively alienate their citizens. Resentment arising from such marginalization has often been the cause of much of the conflicts plaguing the subregion.

The complexity in the causes of conflict in West Africa is reflected in the complementarities of each of the earlier listed factors and that of SALW in instigating and sustaining conflict. The role of all these factors in West African armed violence is often intertwined. While some observers have assert that the fundamental cause of conflict in West Africa is leadership failure and inept economic policies (some of these, attributable to colonialism) others have held that discontent with the status quo and political resentment are in themselves incapable of igniting violence in the scale experienced in West Africa unless empowered by arms. The experience in West Africa does not absolutely invalidate any of the positions. In Liberia for instance, Samuel Doe's misrule was the trigger to popular disaffection and widespread antigovernment sentiments. It is, however, important to note that while the resentment against Doe and his administration was at this time palpable, the situation never degenerated into armed violence until Charles Taylor was able to introduced arms into the equation with the aid and support of his external mentors. It could also on the other hand be logical to reason that if Doe had not alienated the people through his unpopular policies, even with firearms, Charles Taylor would not have been able to mobilize support for his insurrection. Therefore, the theory of SALW as a fundamental cause of insecurity though critical, is insufficient in explaining West African security dilemma without the dimension of other political and social triggers to insecurity in the region.

What remains uncontestable however is the exacerbating capacity of SALW to existing conflict and its debilitating effect on security. Introduction of SALW to any conflict most definitely increases the intensity and lethality of such conflicts and makes conflict resolution complex and difficult. Armed violence perpetrates itself by boosting

supply and entrenching SALW proliferation channels. The resulting steady and increased supply in turn escalates and complicates the conflict with disastrous consequence to all facets of security, like human development, human security and state developmental capacity. Often as security plummeted in affected nations, they lose their capacity to render basic state functions, economy collapses and the people are plunged into depths of poverty and deprivation. Conditions as these, creates the environment necessary to sustain armed violence by extending the range of deprived and disenchanted and uneducated youths available for recruitment by dissident factions and further pair the capacity of state security agencies to function. SALW and violence become therefore mutually reinforcing fostering a vicious circle of violence, arms proliferation and social and economic deprivation that becomes difficult to break without external intervention.

Other less charitable role of external actors in the regions SALW proliferation is perhaps most aptly reflected in the sources and channels of SALW to the subregion. Besides the limited production capacity of local black smiths in the region, all forms of SALW are imported from outside the subregion. The channels for these supplies range from official government to government pacts like the US cold War supplies to the Liberian government, to the activities of intermediary countries as Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso Guinea and Libya in subverting international arms embargo into Liberia. Liberia also presented case of arms brokerage by resources-seeking merchant like the timber and iron ore cartel of Charles Taylor. A major concern to the entire subregion is the propensity of SALW to extend their destructive traits across international boundaries. Liberia, Sierra Leone Guinea and Ivory Coast have in succession fallen prey these menace.

Recommendation

The volatility of armed conflict and the portability of SALW have shown how easy it is to internationalize violence as demonstrated in the West African conflagration. The regional impact of SALW menace in West Africa therefore calls for a concerted effort to stemming the proliferation of SALW. Any effort in this direction must however be initiated from the grass root soliciting the support of the very people that stand to bear the most vicious brunt of SALW. This study though acknowledges the role of political and social factors in raising the demand for SALW will direct its recommendations only on means of curbing the supply of SALW.

Emphasis in curbing this supply must primarily be placed on educating the masses on the detriment of SALW. Such public awareness campaign should form the bedrock for further control measures. The logic behind this is that if the culture that tolerates and accepts gun ownership is not broken no amount economic appeasement is would curb proliferation. Civil society groups and NGOS by their affiliation with the masses provide the best machinery for spreading this campaign at the national level.

Although the ECOWAS Moratorium represents a significant step towards a collective effort at curbing SALW proliferation in West Africa, the series of violation of the terms of this moratorium reflects the ineffectiveness of this Moratorium. This is due largely to the legal limitations of the Moratorium, not being legally binding on member states. Countries like Ivory Coast had capitalized on this short coming to supply arms to Liberia in violation of international arms embargo on the country. Efforts must therefore be made by the ECOWAS to upgrade the Moratorium it into a law that will be legally binding on all member states. ECOWAS should also enlist the UN as a guarantor to this

law so that any punitive action be taken against violators would be endorsed by the UN there making such actions more effective and in the case of sanctions extending its application to all UN member nations.

ECOWAS should also impress on member nations to empower their national SALW commissions through adequate funding and staffing. Such commissions should under take harmonization training for all security agencies in West Africa in order to integrate their SALW r information sharing effort and foster information sharing amongst themselves.

Since SALW are mainly imported into the subregion from without, there is also a need for a global action against illicit sale of SALW. The United Nations as a global political body should prevailed upon by the ECOWAS to criminalize arms supply to non state actors in the subregion. A policy could be evolved in the line of the Ottawa Convention prohibiting the use of landmine.

Recommendation for Further Studies

Despite the pervasive state of insecurity in the subregion, Ghana appears to have defiled all theories and logic to the West African security dilemma. Although this study identified the countries low volume of SALW as a dominant factor in its rising security profile this factor can not be viewed in isolation. The scope of this study did not cover the precise nature of refugee movement into Ghana, rudimentary capability and operational modes of Ghana's security agencies and the countries internal wealth distribution pattern as against its national economic profile. Additional studies could be carried out in this areas to investigate other probable factors responsible for its enduring stability in midst of violence.

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